



**ANDROSCOGGIN
LAND TRUST**



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**Testimony on LD 362
An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Replenish the
Land for Maine's Future Program**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Justin LaFontaine, and I am Androscoggin Land Trust (ALT) Board President. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 362 on behalf of Androscoggin Land Trust.

ALT works to conserve and steward critical land in perpetuity within the Androscoggin River watershed. The lands we protect support wildlife habitat, natural resources, farmland, and outdoor recreational opportunities. We have been conserving land for 35 years and have over 5,000 acres of Fee and Easement conservation property from Jay to Durham, including over ten miles of riverfront along the Androscoggin River in both rural and urban areas. These properties include natural areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, working forest land, trails, and recreation areas. With the conservation of these important areas, comes a perpetual responsibility to protect and care for the land.

ALT had been partnering with LMF since 2004. Our collaborate effort have resulted in protecting over 2000 acres of land, ensuring these areas preserve the historical tradition of public recreational use for future generations. These protected lands will continue to provide a home for wildlife and a vital source of clean air and water, as well as a haven for recreation.

Land Trusts around Maine recognize that the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program plays a vital role in bolstering essential natural resource industries such as fishing, farming, forestry, and tourism. By securing public access to significant outdoor areas, LMF enhances the quality of life in the state, ensuring these resources are preserved for future generations and that communities can thrive while enjoying Maine's natural beauty.

We encourage the committee to vote ought to pass on LD 362 to ensure LMF can continue to benefit our people, our economy, and our quality of life.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin LaFontaine'.

Justin LaFontaine
Androscoggin Land Trust
Board President